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A N N E X

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STALIN'S PRESS INTERVIEWS

The dramatic and unprecedented intensification of the current Soviet propaganda "peace offensive," as revealed by Stalin's action in proposing a meeting with President Truman, reflects the grave and increasing anxiety of the Kremlin over the progress of western defensive planning and economic recovery in western Europe. Stalin's interviews also reveal the continued determination of the Kremlin to prevent the containment of the USSR by an increasingly strong western bloc.

By presenting his proposal for a Truman-Stalin meeting through the press rather than through official channels, Stalin has not committed the USSR to any specific action and has been able to exploit the hope of the world for peace. The insincerity of Stalin's proposal is revealed by his refusal to meet President Truman outside the Soviet orbit, which is actually an attempt to create the impression that the West must go to Stalin. Although Stalin's health might keep him from making the long journey to Washington, it presumably would not prevent him from going to a nearby country outside the Soviet orbit. Moreover, if the Kremlin were sincere in its desire to meet the West halfway, Stalin would not have made his proposal to the US alone. This approach was undoubtedly designed to create disunity among the western powers and to arouse the suspicions of the non-Communist world concerning the good faith and reliability of the US. Thus, although the Kremlin would welcome a Truman-Stalin meeting on Soviet terms, Stalin's recent statements offer no evidence of any change in basic Soviet policy toward the West or of any relaxation of Soviet efforts toward the expansion of world Communism.

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In its timing, Stalin's interview appears to have been motivated primarily by the rapid development of the Atlantic Pact. Soviet concern over this development had already been expressed in the Krenin's blunt note to Norway and in the recent Soviet "White Paper" on the Pact. Although the USSR, owing to the proximity of Norway, is unquestionably disturbed over possible Norwegian adherence to the Atlantic Pact, the latest Soviet maneuver reflects Soviet determination to prevent, delay, or at least minimize, the entire western defense effort.

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